

## Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA

## § 1491.21

the FRPP would not be effective because of on-site or off-site conditions.

(c) NRCS will place a higher priority on easements acquired by entities that have extensive experience in managing and enforcing easements.

(d) During the application period, pending offers having appraisals completed and signed by State-certified general appraisers within the preceding one year shall receive higher funding priority by the NRCS State Conservationist. Before funding is released for easement acquisition, the cooperating entity must provide NRCS with a copy of the certified appraisal.

(e) NRCS may place a higher priority on lands and locations that help create a large tract of protected area for viable agricultural production and that are under increasing urban development pressure(s).

(f) NRCS may place a higher priority on lands and locations that link to other Federal, Tribal, or State governments or non-governmental organization efforts with complementary farmland protection objectives (*e.g.* open space, watershed and wildlife habitat protection).

(g) NRCS may place a higher priority on lands that provide multifunctional benefits including social, economic, historical and archaeological, and environmental benefits.

(h) NRCS may place a higher priority on certain geographic regions where the enrollment of particular lands may help achieve National, State, and regional goals and objectives, or enhance existing government or private conservation projects.

(i) NRCS may place a higher priority on farms or ranches that have or will have a greater variety of natural resources protected.

(j) NRCS may place a higher priority on farms or ranches that have a farm succession plan or similar plan established to encourage farm viability for future generations.

(k) NRCS may place a higher priority on the national ranking criteria listed in §1491.6(a)(1) than State criteria, if the NRCS Chief deems appropriate.

## Subpart B—Cooperative Agreements and Conservation Easement Deeds

### § 1491.20 Cooperative agreements.

(a) NRCS, on behalf of CCC, enters into a cooperative agreement with those entities selected for funding awards. Once a proposal is selected by the State Conservationist, the entity must work with the appropriate State Conservationist to finalize and sign the cooperative agreement incorporating all necessary FRPP requirements. The cooperative agreement addresses:

(1) The interests in land to be acquired, including the form of the easements to be used and terms and conditions;

(2) The management and enforcement of the rights acquired;

(3) The role of NRCS;

(4) The responsibilities of the easement manager on lands acquired with the assistance of FRPP; and

(5) Other requirements deemed necessary by NRCS to protect the interests of the United States.

(b) The cooperative agreement will also include an attachment listing the parcels accepted by the State Conservationist, landowners' names, addresses, location map(s), and other relevant information. An example of a cooperative agreement may be obtained from the State Conservationist.

### § 1491.21 Funding.

(a) The State Conservationist, in coordination with the cooperating entity, shall determine the NRCS share of the cost of purchasing a conservation easement.

(b) Under the FRPP, NRCS may provide up to 50 percent of the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement. Entities are required to supplement the NRCS share of the cost of the conservation easement.

(c) Landowner donations up to 25 percent of the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement may be considered part of the entity's matching offer.

(d) For the entity, two cost-share options are available when providing its matching offer.

(1) The entity may provide in cash at least 25 percent of the appraised fair